

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01

ACDA-05 MC-02 EB-07 AID-05 IGA-02 /102 W

----- 126585

O R 251100Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3926

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0488

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, AG, MO, SP, US

SUBJECT: ARMS FOR MOROCCO

1. WAS CALLED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY AFTERNOON FEB.24 BY
DIRECTOR EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS ABERKANE WHO
SAID HE ON INSTRUCTIONS TO CONVEY TO ME GOA CONCERN OVER
AMERICAN PRESS REPORTS ON NEW AMERICAN ARMS DEAL WITH MOROCCO.
SPECIFICALLY, HE SAID, NEW YORK TIMES HAD REPORTED ON 22ND
THAT U.S. WAS GOING TO GIVE MOROCCO 24 AIRCRAFT WORTH \$120 MILLION.
TEXT OF ARTICLE, HE ADDED, HAD QUOTED SENIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL AS
SAYING U.S. WOULD LIKE TO KEEP OUT OF PROBLEM BUT
IN CASE OF CONFRONTATION OUR SYMPATHIES WOULD BE WITH
MOROCCO.

2. ABERKANE WENT ON TO SAY THAT, ON FOLLOWING DAY, AMERICAN
PRESS HAD REPORTED HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE FAVORABLY
DISPOSED TOWARD THE TRANSACTION WHICH HAD GROWN
TO \$112 MILLION WORTH OF AIRCRAFT AND \$58 MILLION WORTH OF
ANTI-TANK EQUIPMENT. COMMITTEE WAS ALEGEDLY COMPARING
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SITUATION IN SAHARA TO ANGOLA AND FELT U.S. SHOULD SUPPORT

ANY PARTY IN OPPOSITION TO SOVIET UNION, PARTICULARLY SINCE MILITARY IMBALANCE NOW SEEMED TO FAVOR ALGERIA. COMMITTEE MEMBERS QUOTED AS NOTING HISTORIC TIES WITH MOROCCO AND FACT LATTER HAD NOT BROKEN RELATIONS IN 1967.

3. ALGERIANS, ABERKANE SAID, UNABLE UNDERSTAND THIS ATTITUDE. FIRST OF ALL, HE WONDERED WHY WE PREPARED IGNORE OUR ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN ALGERIA, WHICH VERY IMPORTANT. SECONDLY, AS SECRETARY-GENERAL BENHABYLES HAD TOLD ME AT LAST MEETING, SOVIETS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ALGERIA IN SAHARA. ALGERIA WAS NOT WORKING FOR SOVIETS OR ANYONE ELSE. ALGERIANS WERE VERY CONCERNED BY AUTOMATIC TENDENCY OF MANY AMERICANS TO BE HOSTILE TO ANYONE WHO ACQUIRED ARMS FRO SOVIET UNION. ALGERIA HAD TRIED MANY YEARS AGO TO GET ARMS FROM THE U.S. BUT HAD BREN TURNED DOWN. WHERE WERE THEY TO GO? FOREIGN MINISTER HIMSELF WAS STUDYING THIS CASE AND WOULD LIKE ANY FACTUAL INFORMATION WE MIGHT GIVE HIM TO REASSURE HIM AS TO OUR INTENTIONS.

4. I SAID THERE WERE TWO ESSENTIAL POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND. FIRST, ARMS IN QUESTION WERE NOT BEING GIVEN BUT BEING SOLD. FMS CREDITS WERE STILL QUITE MODEST. FURTHERMORE, DELIVERY SCHEDULES WERE SUCH THAT THESE ARMS WOULD NOT HAVE MUCH IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON CURRENT ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN CONFRONTATION. SECOND POINT TO KEEP IN MIND WAS THAT ARMS BEING SUPPLIED INCONNECTION WITH LONG-STANDING COMMITMENTS MADE TO MOROCCANS WELL BEFORE SAHARA CRISIS ERUPTED. SPANISH HAD SLREADY GIVEN TO ALGERIANS ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF ARMS PACKAGE. THAT WAS STILL WHAT WE WERE OPERATING ON TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE. I SAID I WOULD CONVEY GOA CONCERNS TO MY GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY, HOWEVER, AND REQUEST COMMENT.

5. COMMENT. ABERKANE'S PRESENTATION WAS LOW KEY, BUT I THINK WE CAN ASSUME ALGERIANS ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED. REQUEST GUIDANCE. HOW FAR HAVE WE GONE BEYOND TWO-BRIGADE PACKAGE? HOW OLD IS F-5 COMMITMENT?

6. FOR HISTORICAL RECORD: ABERKANE SAID INFO RE TWO-BRIGADE PACKAGE NOT GIVEN TO ALGERIANS BY SPANISH OFFICIALS BUT TAKEN FROM SPANISH PRESS. HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER THIS TRUE. CONFIDENTIAL

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CAN MADRID CONFIRM? PARKER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ARMS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ALGIER00488
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760070-0654
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760217/aaaaansl.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 MAY 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARMS FOR MOROCCO
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, AG, MO, SP, US, (ABERKANE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006